

Haribhadra's *Commentary Clarifying the Meaning* cites the following sutric passages that teach the five sublime eyes (which were cited before and as part of the *General Meaning* are cited again):

- 1) The sutric passage that teaches the physical sublime eye is: "physical [sublime eye]" and "that ascertains things individually"
- 2) The sutric passage that teaches the celestial sublime eye is: "celestial [sublime eye], which arose from fruition" and "that [knows] death-transference and birth of all sentient beings"
- 3) The sutric passage that teaches the sublime eye of wisdom is: "[sublime eye] of wisdom" and "that does not conceptualize with respect to all phenomena"
- 4) The sutric passage that teaches the sublime eye of Dharma is: "[sublime eye] of Dharma" and "that realizes all Arya beings"
- 5) The sutric passage that teaches the sublime eye of a Buddha is: "[sublime eye of] a Buddha" and "that is a completely enlightened object-possessor [which realizes] all aspects of all phenomena. Furthermore, they are established as one in suchness."

The *General Meaning* proceeds with expounding on the five sublime eyes by way of five subtopics:

1. The (physical and mental) basis of the five sublime eyes
2. The individual natures of the five sublime eyes
3. The sameness of levels
4. The demarcation of the five sublime eyes
5. The functions of the five sublime eyes

#### 1. The (physical and mental) basis of the five sublime eyes

The basis of the five sublime eyes is subdivided into:

- i. The physical basis of the five sublime eyes
- ii. The mental basis of the five sublime eyes

##### i. The physical basis of the five sublime eyes

The physical basis of the five sublime eyes refers to the *person* in whose continuum any of the five sublime eyes arises. It is called 'physical basis' because of the five aggregates the *physical* aggregate is the principal *basis* of designation based on which a person is designated as pertaining to a particular realm. E.g. the human body is the principal aggregate based on which a person is designated as a human being.

The first two sublime eyes (the physical sublime eye and the celestial sublime eye) can both be found in the continua of non-Buddhists.

The physical sublime eye can be found in the continua of non-Buddhists who in dependence on an actual concentration have cultivated the faculty that pertains to the level of concentration. In dependence on such faculty non-Buddhists are able to perceive phenomena in the three-thousand-fold world system at a distance ranging from at least one hundred yojanas .

Furthermore, the celestial sublime eye can also be found in the mental continua of non-Buddhists because non-Buddhists, who in dependence on a causal meditative concentration were born, for instance, in the cloudless region, are now able to see their and others' past and future life.

(Please note that the cloudless region is one of the seventeen regions of the form realm. The seventeen regions of the form realm will be explained in the next handout. A causal meditative concentration is one of the four concentrations and will be explained on the next page).

- Regarding the statement that non-Buddhists cultivate the first two sublime eyes, someone raises the following qualm: "This is not correct because it says in the sutra:

*Great Bodhisattvas who wish to attain and thoroughly cultivate the five eyes are to train in the six perfections.*

However, there are no non-Buddhists who practice the six perfections."

There is no fault because this passage teaches that those who practice the six perfections will attain the five sublime eyes; it does not teach that whoever has cultivated the five sublime eyes necessarily practices the six perfections.

The latter three sublime eyes (the sublime eye of wisdom, the sublime eye of Dharma, and the sublime eye of a Buddha) are only found in the continua of Aryas because there are no ordinary beings who are

able to cultivate them.

**i. The mental basis of the five sublime eyes**

The mental basis of a sublime eye refers to the type of awareness as which a sublime eye arises. The mental bases of *newly* cultivated sublime eyes are necessarily any of the four concentrations because it is easier to newly cultivate a sublime eye in dependence on a concentration.

However, once a sublime eye has been cultivated one does not have to generate it in dependence on a concentration anymore because there are sublime eyes that are any of the four concentrations and there are sublime eyes that are any of the four formless absorptions.

Next follows an auxiliary description of the four concentrations and the four formless absorptions. This description is not from Panchen Sonam Drakpa's **General Meaning** but nonetheless necessary in order to fully comprehend the topic of the five sublime eyes.

A more extensive presentation of the concentrations and absorptions will be given later during the presentation of one of the subsequent topics of the **Ornament**.

**THE FOUR CONCENTRATIONS AND THE FOUR FORMLESS ABSORPTIONS**

Please note that there are four concentrations and four formless absorptions (see Chart 1). These eight meditative absorptions are the product of intense meditation and are cultivated by both Buddhists and non-Buddhists. The four concentrations are simply known as 'first concentration', 'second concentration', 'third concentration', and 'fourth concentration', whereas each of the four formless absorptions has a particular name that corresponds to its object of meditation. The first formless absorption is called 'limitless space', the second 'limitless Consciousness', the third 'nothingness', and the fourth 'peak of cyclic existence'.

Each of the four concentrations causes rebirth in one of the four Form Realms and each of the four formless absorptions causes rebirth in one of the four Formless Realms. This means that in order to be reborn in the First Form Realm one must have attained the first concentration, in order to take rebirth in the Second Form Realm one must have attained the second concentration, and so forth. Likewise, in order to be reborn in the First Formless Realm one must have attained the first formless absorption called 'limitless space', in order to be reborn in the Second Formless Realm one must have attained the second formless absorption called 'limitless consciousness', and so forth.

This explanation correlates to the Buddhist description of the three realms and the nine levels of Samsara.

The three realms are:

- I) Desire Realm
- II) Form Realm
- III) Formless Realm

The Desire Realm can be subdivided into six types:

- a. Hell Realm
- b. Preta Realm
- c. Animal Realm
- d. Human Realm
- e. Semi-celestial Realm
- f. Celestial Realm

As mentioned above, the Form and Formless Realms have four divisions each, corresponding to the meditative absorptions that cause rebirth in them.

Hence the four realms of the Form Realm are:

- (1) First Concentration (Level/Abode)
- (2) Second Concentration (Level/Abode)
- (3) Third Concentration (Level/Abode)
- (4) Fourth Concentration (Level/Abode)

The four levels of the Formless Realm are:

- (1) Limitless Space (Level/Abode)
- (2) Limitless Consciousness (Level/Abode)

